2: Williams E, G-5 (1923-1925) 1928
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2. *Environment and the Food Quest*

133 The Northern Division, peopled by the Orokaiva, is one of the favoured regions of Papua. From mountain boundaries on the inland side—the Central Range on the west, Lamington and the Hydrographers on the south—a wide alluvial plain slopes very gradually down to the sea. A number of rivers pursuing a north-easterly course and running almost parallel, divide this plain at curiously equal intervals: from south to north they are the Girewo, Kumusi, Opi, Mambare, and Gira. Except for abrupt but shallow river terraces and a few island hills, this northern plain is almost flat with a hardly perceptible seaward slope. Viewed in the afternoon from one of the hills on its western border and dimmed slightly by a tropical haze, it resembles a perfectly calm sea, whose further margin fades unnoticed into the real sea on the east.

Whereas the foot-hills of the Central Range rise somewhat steeply from the level plain, those of Mount Lamington and the Hydrographers descend in a broad comfortable sweep intersected by ravines and bounding rivulets. Thickly populated and with innumerable garden-clearings, this piedmont area of the Northern Division is perhaps one of the most fertile and beautiful in all Papua.

134 But though here the soil is comparatively rich and well drained, it is often of poor quality on the plain proper. Sometimes sandy it is more often soggy and clayey, and where the vegetation is cleared it will become in the dry weather a hard, light-coloured earth—so hard as almost to defy the gardener's simple digging-stick. On the 137 lower reaches of the rivers are stretches of sago swamp of an extent not fully known; and along the coast belts of nipa and mangrove.

By far the greater part of the Northern Division is covered with forest. Very extensive areas have been at one time or another cleared for gardens, and here the timber is lighter, and from the forester's view-point